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ABSTRACT

By the early 1900s, many Americans were calling child labor child slavery and were demanding an end to it. Lewis Hine, a New York City schoolteacher and photographer, believed that a picture could tell a powerful story. He felt so strongly about the abuse of children as workers that he quit his teaching job and became an investigative photographer for the National Child Labor Committee. Hine traveled around the country photographing the working conditions of children in all types of industries, including coal mines, meat packing houses, textile mills, and canneries. By 1916 Congress passed the Keating-Owens Act that established child labor standards, and by 1920 the number of child laborers was cut to nearly half of what it had been in 1910. This lesson relates to the First Amendment rights, including freedom of the press and right of the people to petition the government for a redress of grievances. The primary lesson sources are 16 Hine collection photographs of children working. It correlates to the National History Standards and to the National Civics and Government Standards. The lesson presents historical background of the era (with three resources) and suggests diverse teaching activities for classroom implementation, including brainstorming, photograph analysis, creative writing, class discussion, and interactive computer activity. A photograph analysis worksheet and the Hine photographs are appended. (BT)

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National Archives and Records Administration

THE CONSTITUTION COMMUNITY

The Development of the Industrial United States (1870-1900)

Photographs of Lewis Hine: Documentation of Child Labor

By Linda Darus Clark

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http://www.nara.gov/education/classrm.html

2001

The Constitution Community is a partnership between classroom teachers and education specialists from the National Archives and Records Administration. We are developing lessons and activities that address constitutional issues, correlate to national academic standards, and encourage the analysis of primary source documents. The lessons that have been developed are arranged according to historical era.

SO033592

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Photographs of Lewis Hine: Documentation of Child Labor

Constitutional Connection

This lesson relates to the First Amendment rights, including freedom of the press and right of the people to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

This lesson correlates to the National History Standards.

Era 6 -The Development of the Industrial United States (1870-1900)

- **Standard 3A** -Demonstrate understanding of how the "second industrial revolution" changed the nature of work and conditions of work.

This lesson correlates to the National Standards for Civics and Government.

Standard V.B.3 -Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding economic rights.

Cross-curricular Connections

Share this exercise with your history, government, language arts, and business law colleagues.

List of Documents

All are photographs from the Lewis Hine collection.

1. Photograph of garment workers, New York, NY, January 25, 1908.

2. Photograph of a basket seller in a Cincinnati, OH, market, August 22, 1908.

3. Photograph of boys and girls selling radishes, August 22, 1908.

4. Photograph of a boy working in a shoe-shining parlor, Indianapolis, IN, August 1908 .

5. Photograph of boys in a cigar factory, Indianapolis, IN, August 1908.

6. Photograph of a boy running "trip rope" in a mine, Welch, WV, September 1908.

7. Photograph of children working in a bottle factory, Indianapolis, IN, August 1908.

8. Photograph of the noon hour at an Indianapolis cannery, Indianapolis IN, August 1908.

9. Photograph of a glass blower and mold boy, Grafton, WV, October 1908.

10. Photograph of girls at weaving machines, Evansville, IN, October 1908.

11. Photograph of young boys shucking oysters, Apalachicola, FL, January 25, 1909.

12. Photograph of a girl working in box factory, Tampa, FL, January 28, 1909.

13. Photograph of a nine-year old newsgirl, Hartford, CT, March 6, 1909.

14. Photograph of a boy picking berries near Baltimore, MD, June 8, 1909.

15. Photograph of workers stringing beans, Baltimore, MD, June 7, 1909.

16. Photograph of boys working in an arcade bowling alley, Trenton, NJ, December 20, 1909.

Historical Background

"There is work that profits children, and there is work that brings profit only to employers. The object of employing children is not to train them, but to get high profits from their work."

-- Lewis Hine, 1908

After the Civil War, the availability of natural resources, new inventions, and a receptive market combined to fuel an industrial boom. The demand for labor

grew, and in the late 19th and early 20th centuries many children were drawn into the labor force. Factory wages were so low that children often had to work to help support their families. The number of children under the age of 15 who worked in industrial jobs for wages climbed from 1.5 million in 1890 to 2 million in 1910. Businesses liked to hire children because they worked in unskilled jobs for lower wages than adults, and their small hands made them more adept at handling small parts and tools. Children were seen as part of the family economy. Immigrants and rural migrants often sent their children to work, or worked alongside them. However, child laborers barely experienced their youth. Going to school to prepare for a better future was an opportunity these underage workers rarely enjoyed. As children worked in industrial settings, they began to develop serious health problems. Many child laborers were underweight. Some suffered from stunted growth and curvature of the spine. They developed diseases related to their work environment, such as tuberculosis and bronchitis for those who worked in coal mines or cotton mills. They faced high accident rates due to physical and mental fatigue caused by hard work and long hours.

By the early 1900s many Americans were calling child labor "child slavery" and were demanding an end to it. They argued that long hours of work deprived children of the opportunity of an education to prepare themselves for a better future. Instead, child labor condemned them to a future of illiteracy, poverty, and continuing misery. In 1904 a group of progressive reformers founded the National Child Labor Committee, an organization whose goal was the abolition of child labor. The organization received a charter from Congress in 1907. It hired teams of investigators to gather evidence of children working in harsh conditions and then organized exhibitions with photographs and statistics to dramatize the plight of these children. These efforts resulted in the establishment in 1912 of the Children's Bureau as a federal information clearinghouse. In 1913 the Children's Bureau was transferred to the Department of Labor.

Lewis Hine, a New York City schoolteacher and photographer, believed that a picture could tell a powerful story. He felt so strongly about the abuse of children as workers that he quit his teaching job and became an investigative photographer for the National Child Labor Committee. Hine traveled around the country photographing the working conditions of children in all types of industries. He photographed children in coal mines, in meatpacking houses, in textile mills, and in canneries. He took pictures of children working in the streets as shoe shiners, newsboys, and hawkers. In many instances he tricked his way into factories to take the pictures that factory managers did not want the public to see. He was careful to document every photograph with precise facts and figures. To obtain captions for his pictures, he interviewed the children on some pretext and then scribbled his notes with his hand hidden inside his pocket. Because he used subterfuge to take his photographs, he believed that he had to be "double-sure that my photo data was 100% pure--no retouching or fakery of any kind." Hine defined a good photograph as "a reproduction of impressions made upon the

photographer which he desires to repeat to others." Because he realized his photographs were subjective, he described his work as "photo-interpretation."

Hine believed that if people could see for themselves the abuses and injustice of child labor, they would demand laws to end those evils. By 1916, Congress passed the Keating-Owens Act that established the following child labor standards: a minimum age of 14 for workers in manufacturing and 16 for workers in mining; a maximum workday of 8 hours; prohibition of night work for workers under age 16; and a documentary proof of age. Unfortunately, this law was later ruled unconstitutional on the ground that congressional power to regulate interstate commerce did not extend to the conditions of labor. Effective action against child labor had to await the New Deal. Reformers, however, did succeed in forcing legislation at the state level banning child labor and setting maximum hours. By 1920 the number of child laborers was cut to nearly half of what it had been in 1910.

Lewis Hine died in poverty, neglected by all but a few. His reputation continued to grow, however, and now he is recognized as a master American photographer. His photographs remind us what it was like to be a child and to labor like an adult at a time when labor was harsher than it is now. Hine's images of working children stirred America's conscience and helped change the nation's labor laws. Through his exercise of free speech and freedom of the press, Lewis Hine made a difference in the lives of American workers and, most importantly, American children. Hundreds of his photographs are available online from the National Archives through the NAIL database.

Resources

Foner, Eric, and John A. Garraty, eds. *The Reader's Companion to American History* . Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991.

Nash, Gary B., et al. *The American People: Creating a Nation and a Society* . New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1990.

Tindall, George Brown, with David E. Shi. *America: A Narrative History* . New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1992.

Teaching Activities

Brainstorming

1. Write the Lewis Hine quote that introduces the Background Information on the board and ask students to discuss it in relation to labor in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Then ask if they can draw a correlation to labor today. Next, provide students with background information on Lewis Hine and the child labor movement at the turn of the century. Be certain to discuss Hine's use of

photography and its value to the reform movement. Finally, ask how many students have a family album of photographs. Ask: Why do we take and keep photographs? What information can you gather from photographs? How can historians use photographs? What information can historians gather from photographs? Discuss the issues of the photographer's point of view in taking pictures.

Photograph Analysis

2. Print out a copy of Document 1 and reproduce it on a transparency. Use this photograph to demonstrate to the students techniques in photo analysis. Give students a few minutes to look at the photograph. Turn off the projector, and ask them to write down everything they saw in the photograph. After a few minutes, ask students to share their findings. They will probably have some conflicting views; some students will see things that others have not seen or, in some cases, claim to have seen things not present in the photograph. Cut an 8 1/2" x 11" piece of paper into four parts. Place these four parts over the picture so that you can reveal one section of the photograph at a time, keeping the rest of the picture covered. Ask students to look closely at the area that is revealed and describe what they see in the photograph. This will draw their attention to the details of the photograph. After students have had an opportunity to view each section, uncover the whole photograph and ask them how what they now see in the photograph has changed.

3. Divide students into small groups. Give each group a copy of one of the featured photographs from the Hine collection. The photographs can be printed from the digitized image, or they can be downloaded onto a disk and each group can work from the image on their computers. If your classroom has the advantage of Internet access, students can locate their photographs through the National Archives Web site by using the control number for the assigned photographs (these are listed below). Next, ask each group to study the selected photograph as they did in the demonstration. Then distribute the Photograph Analysis Worksheet developed by the National Archives education staff and direct students to complete the questions. After each group has completed its analysis, ask them to share their photographs and the information from their analyses. Each group should answer the question: What does this photograph tell you about child labor at the turn of the century?

Creative Writing

4. As a creative writing assignment, ask each group from Activity 3 to create a story around its photograph that addresses the issues of child labor. Possible issues include safety on the job, inability to get an education, health hazards in the work environment, general health of young children, the movement to abolish child labor, and general living conditions of the era.

5. For an independent creative writing assignment, ask students to create a diary entry for a person in one of the photographs. Direct students to describe in detail the person's workday and explain his or her reasons for working and feelings about the job.

Class Discussion

6. At the conclusion of these activities, lead a class discussion about the issues of labor and the role of the government. Ask: Should the government regulate labor in private industry? Why or why not? How far should regulation go? How can companies be held responsible for working conditions? What labor regulations are in effect today? How and why were these regulations established?

7. Poll students to find out how many have jobs. Ask: What jobs do you hold? What procedures required by the federal or state government did you have to follow before you could be employed? What are the regulations you have to follow in your particular jobs? Were you advised of safety rules or hour restrictions? What are the dangers of your particular jobs? Do you feel you have adequate protection as employed minors? What would you change about your jobs? Create a list of job-related problems students have today. Ask: What are the obstacles you face if you try to change your working conditions. Brainstorm ideas about how students can address these labor issues in their own employment and create an action plan.

Interactive Computer Activity

8. As an interactive computer activity utilizing the Internet and multimedia, divide students into teams of 2 to 4 students. Direct each team to use the National Archives NAIL database <http://www.nara.gov/nara/nail.html> to search the photographs of Lewis Hine. They only need to use the keyword "Lewis Hine." Challenge the students on each team to identify 10 photographs that they feel best tell the story of child labor during the early 1900s. Teams should download their chosen photographs and create multimedia presentations for the class explaining and defending their choices. Explain that the evaluation will be based on their use of the Internet, incorporation of multimedia, and understanding of child labor issues at the turn of the century.

The phographs included in this project are from Record Group 102, Records of the Department of Commerce and Labor, Children's Bureau. They are available online through the National Archives Information Locator (NAIL) http://www.nara.gov/nara/nail.html database control numbers: NWDNS-102-LH-1A, NWDNS102-lh-42a, NWDNS-102-LH-45, NWDNS-102-LH-50, NWDNS-102-LH-62, NWDNS-102-LH-70, NWDNS-102-LH-88, NWDNS-102-LH-130, NWDNS-102-LH-151, NWDNS-102-LH-220, NWDNS-102-LH-563, NWDNS-102-LH-584, NWDNS-102-LH-640, NWDNS-102-LH-828, NWDNS-102-LH-855, NWDNS-102-LH-1042. Each is accompanied by a significant caption written by Lewis Hine. NAIL is a searchable database that contains

information about a wide variety of NARA holdings across the country. You can use NAIL to search record descriptions by keywords or topics and retrieve digital copies of selected textual documents, photographs, maps, and sound recordings related to thousands of topics.

This article was written by Linda Darus Clark, a teacher at Padua Franciscan High School in Parma, Ohio.

National Archives and Records Administration

Photograph Analysis Worksheet

Step 1. Observation

A. Study the photograph for 2 minutes. Form an overall impression of the photograph and then examine individual items. Next, divide the photo into quadrants and study each section to see what new details become visible.

B. Use the chart below to list people, objects, and activities in the photograph.

PEOPLE	OBJECTS	ACTIVITIES

Step 2. Inference

Based on what you have observed above, list three things you might infer from this photograph.

_____

_____

_____

Step 3. Questions

A. What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?

_____

_____

B. Where could you find answers to them?

_____

_____

Designed and developed by the
Education Staff, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408.

Document 1: Photograph of garment workers, New York, NY, January 25, 1908

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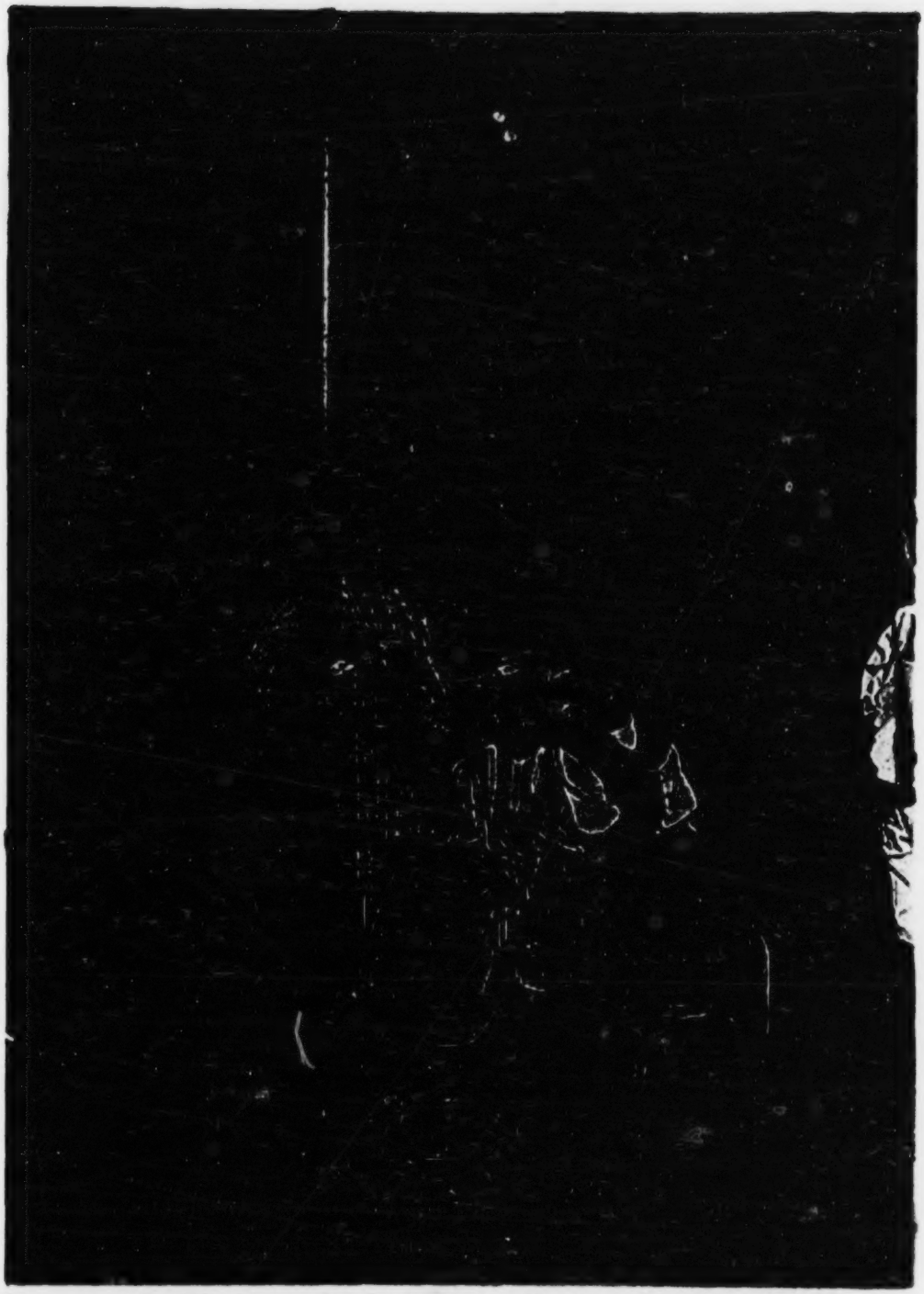

Document 2: Photograph of a basket seller in a Cincinnati, OH, market, August 22, 1908

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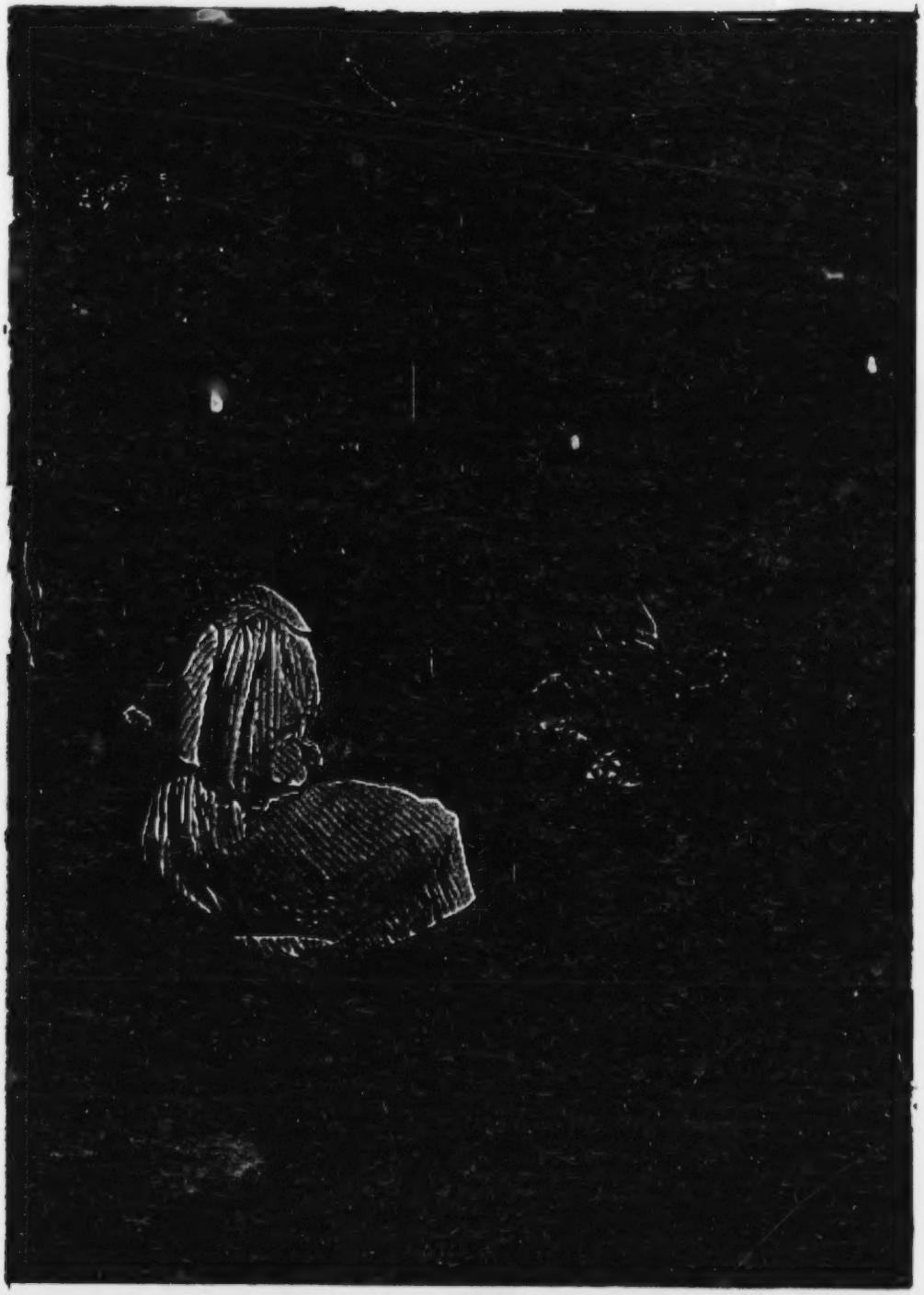

Document 3: Photograph of boys and girls selling radishes, August 22, 1908.

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Document 4: Photograph of a boy working in a shoe-shining parlor, Indianapolis, IN, August 1908.

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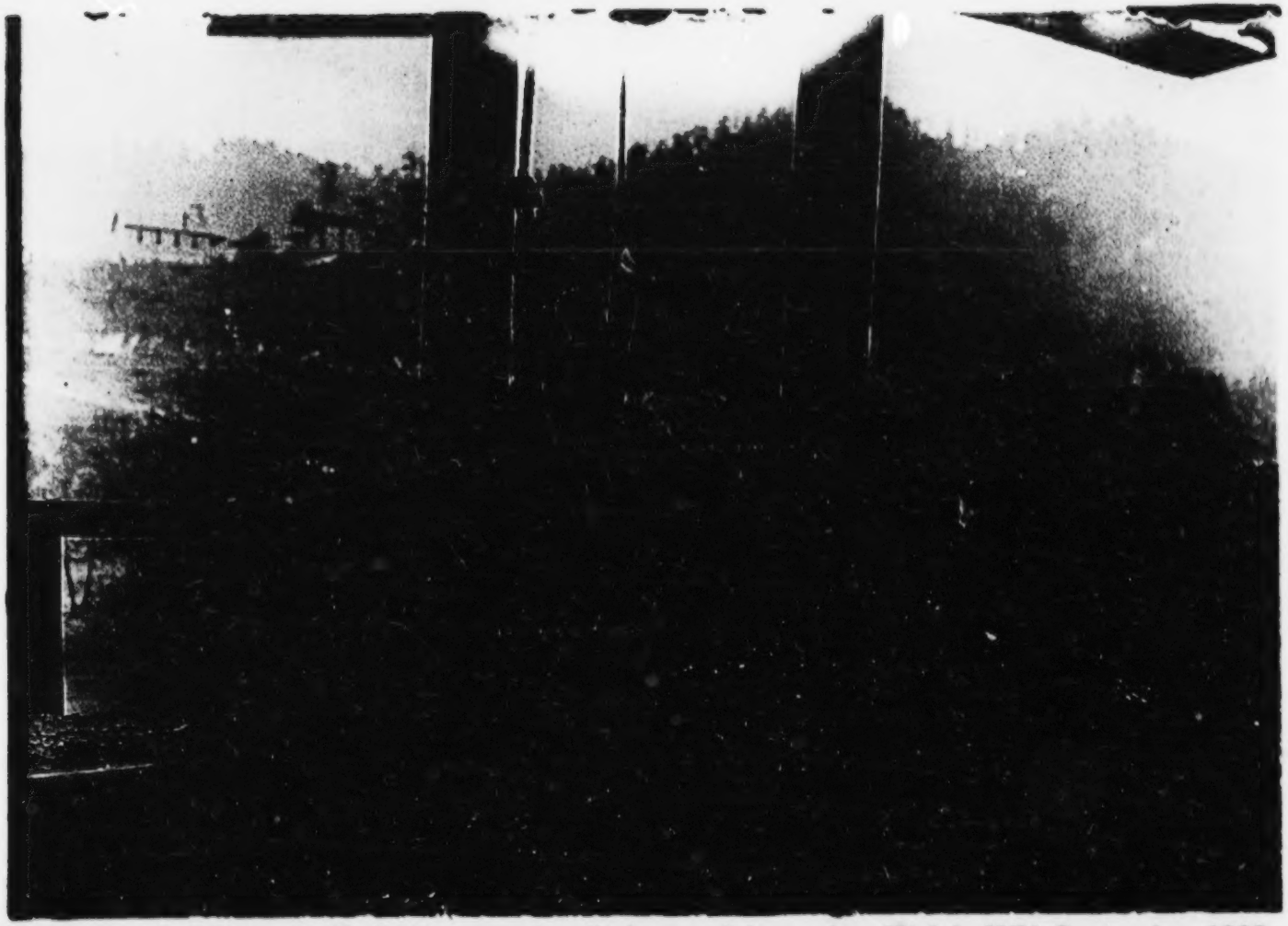
Document 5: Photograph of boys in a cigar factory, Indianapolis, IN, August 1908



Document 6: Photograph of a boy running "trip rope" in a mine, Welch, WV, September 1908 .

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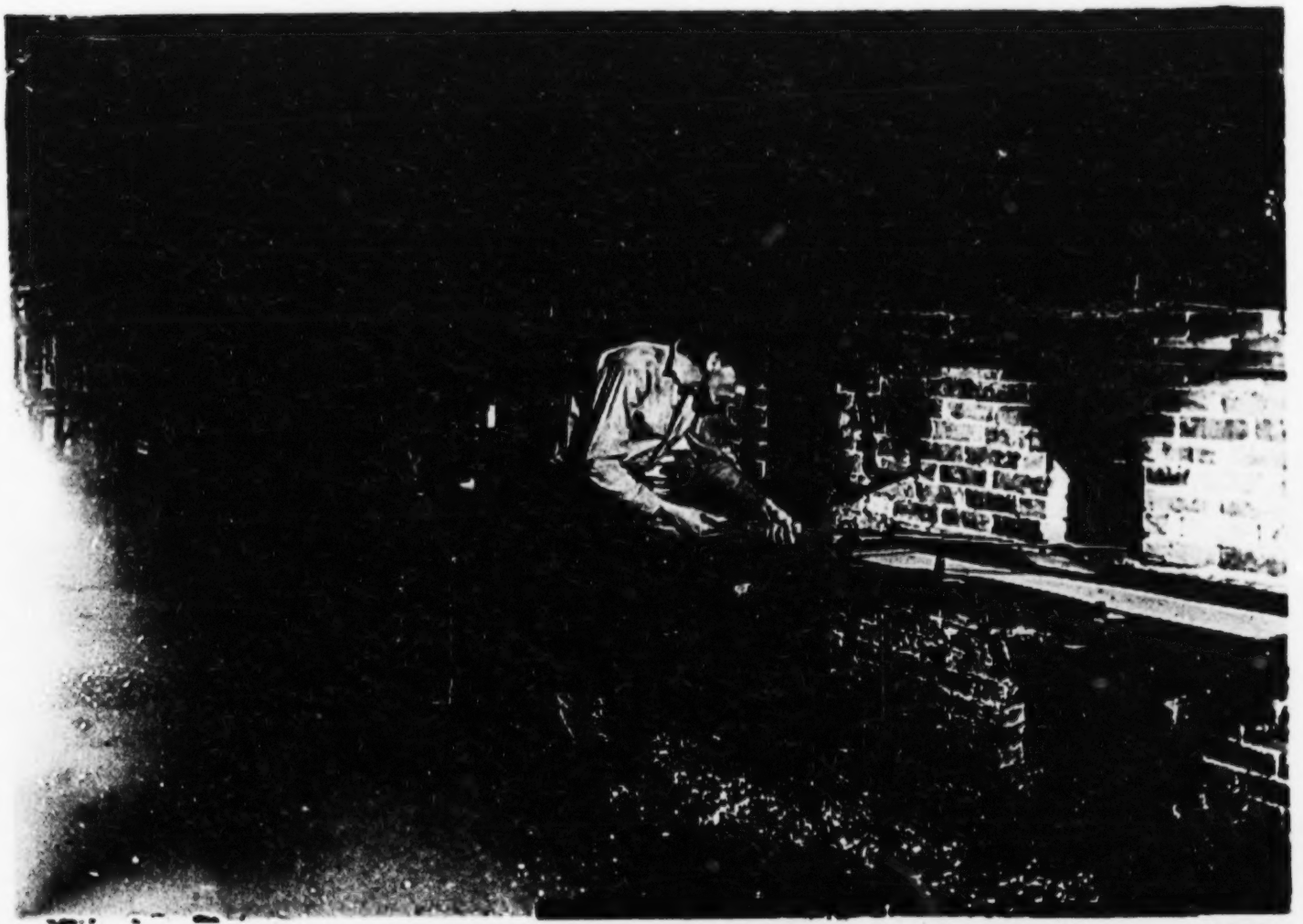

Document 7: Photograph of children working in a bottle factory, Indianapolis, IN, August 1908.

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Document 8: Photograph of the noon hour at an Indianapolis cannery, Indianapolis IN, August 1908

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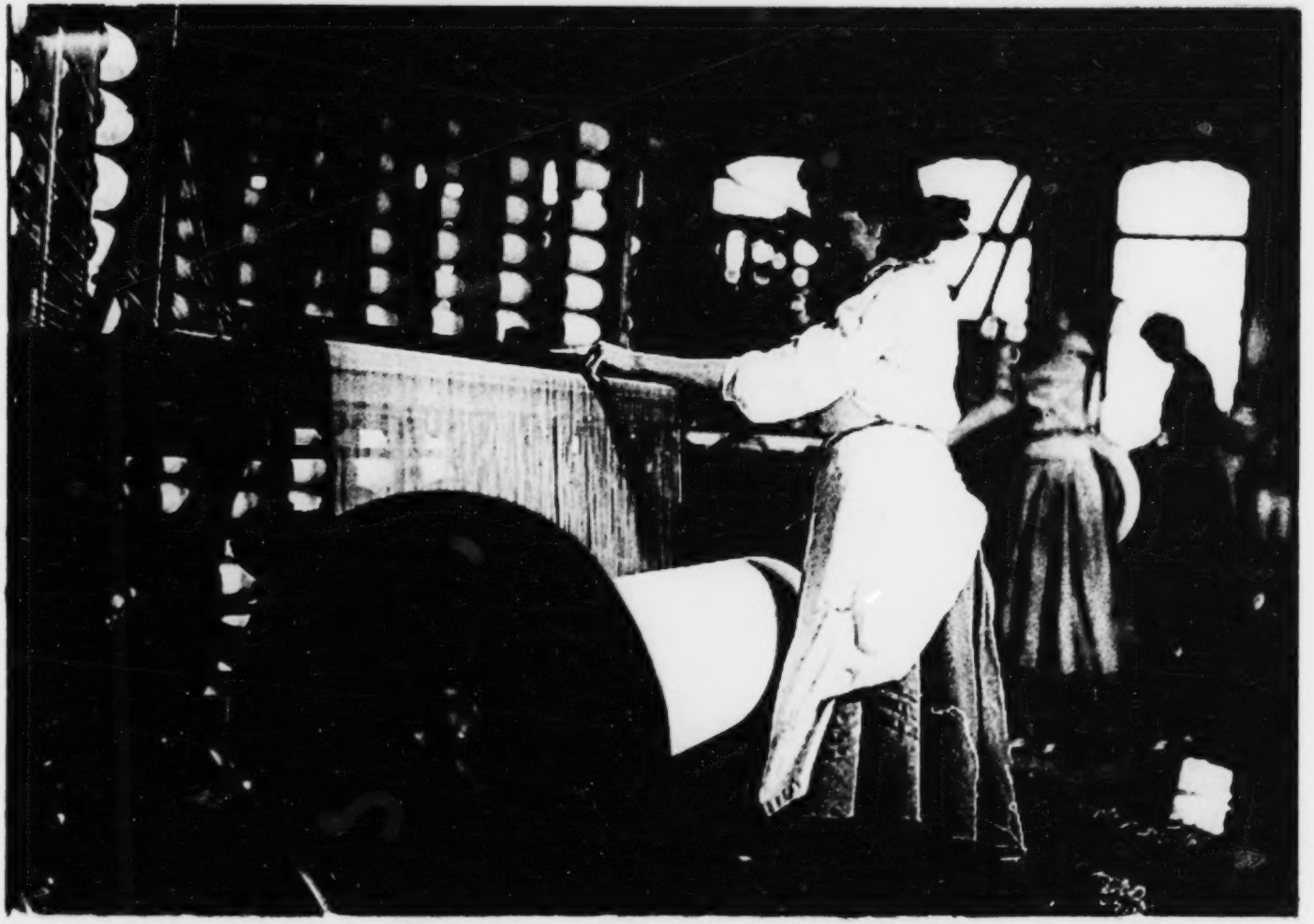
Document 9: Photograph of a glass blower and mold boy, Grafton, WV, October 1908



Document 10: Photograph of girls at weaving machines, Evansville, IN, October 1908.

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Document 11: Photograph of young boys shucking oysters, Apalachicola, FL, January 25, 1909.

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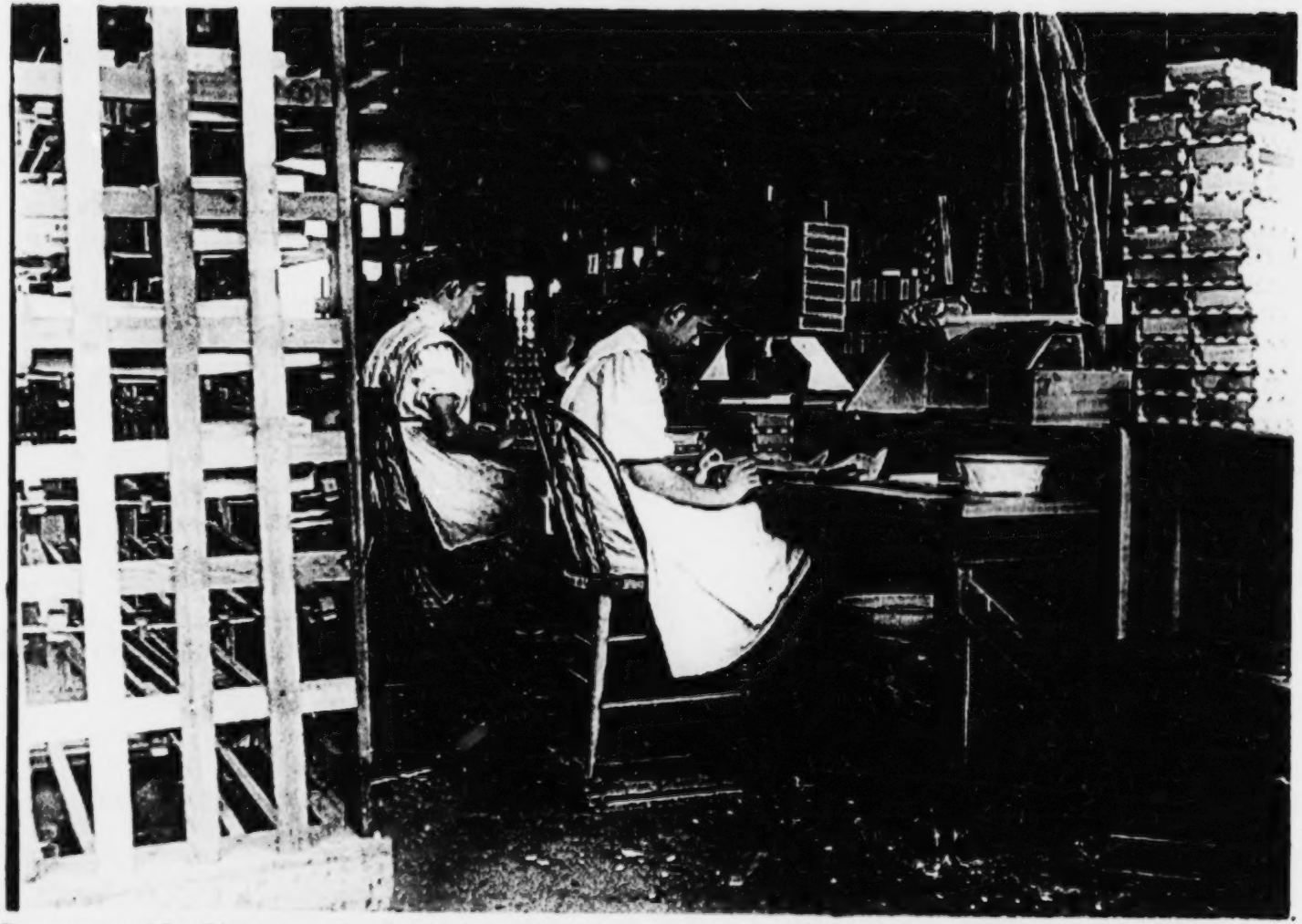

Document 12: Photograph of a girl working in box factory, Tampa, FL, January 28, 1909.

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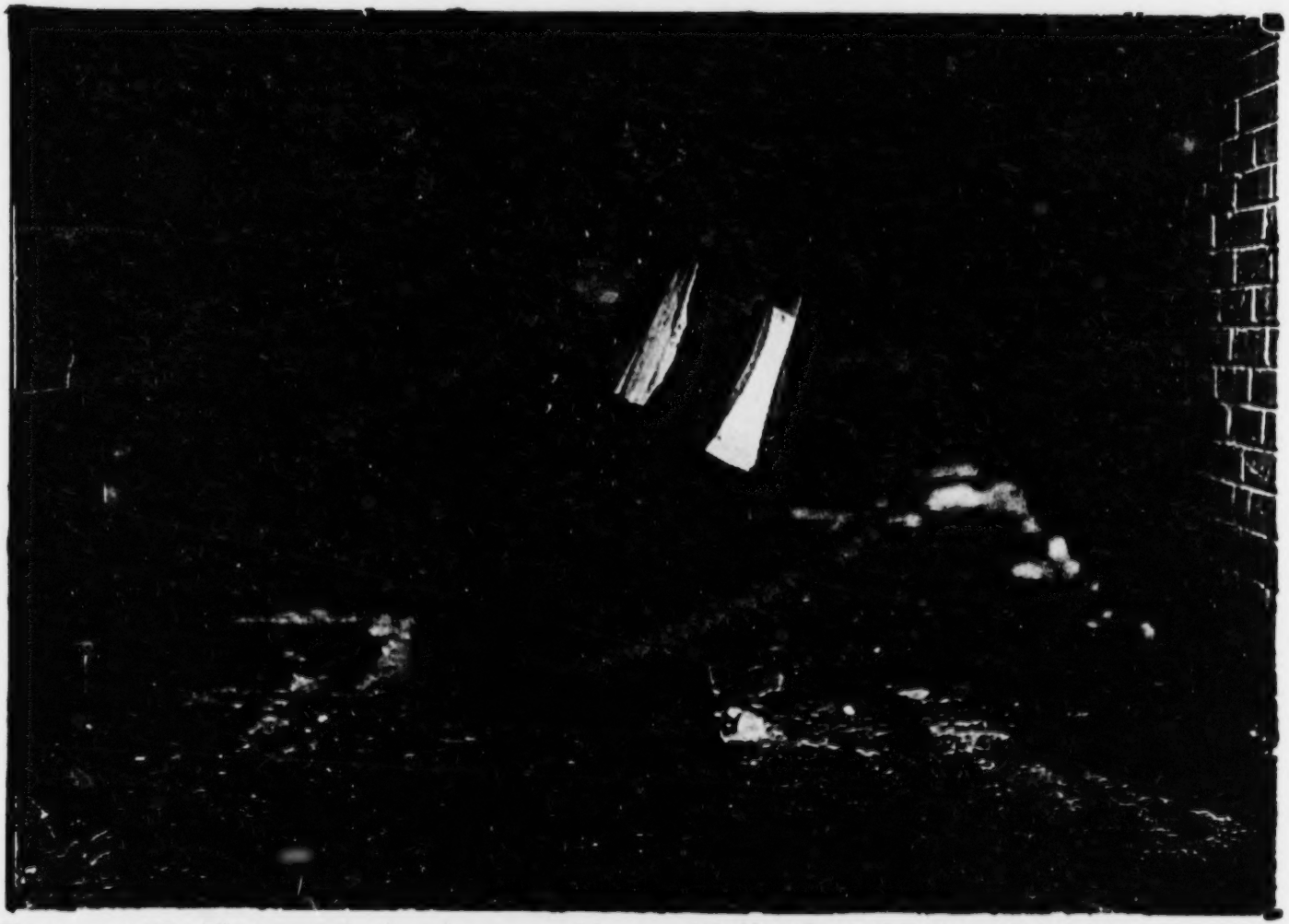

Document 13: Photograph of a nine-year old newsgirl, Hartford, CT, March 6, 1909.

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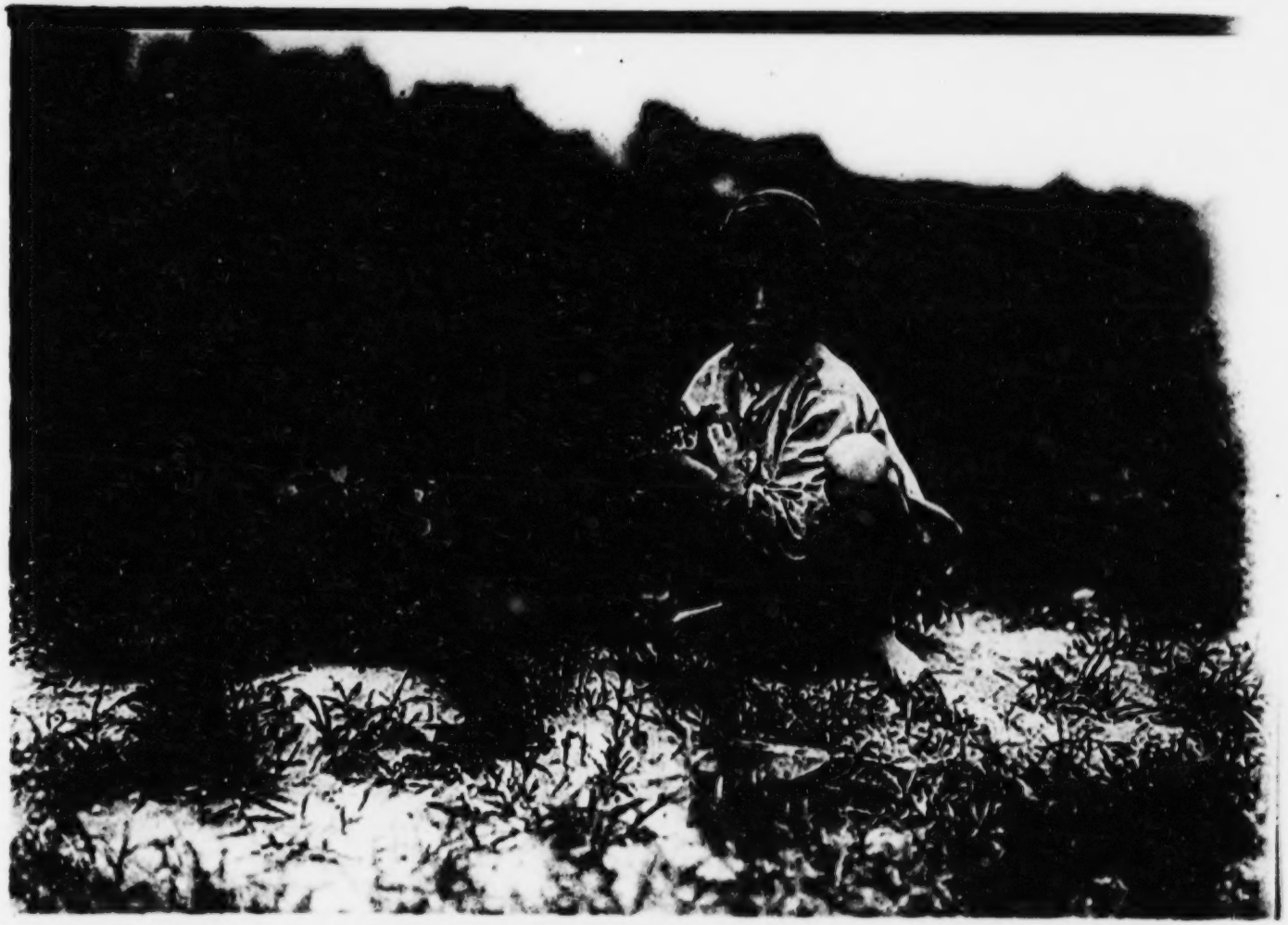

Document 14: Photograph of a boy picking berries near Baltimore, MD, June 8, 1909.

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Document 15: Photograph of workers stringing beans, Baltimore, MD, June 7, 1909.

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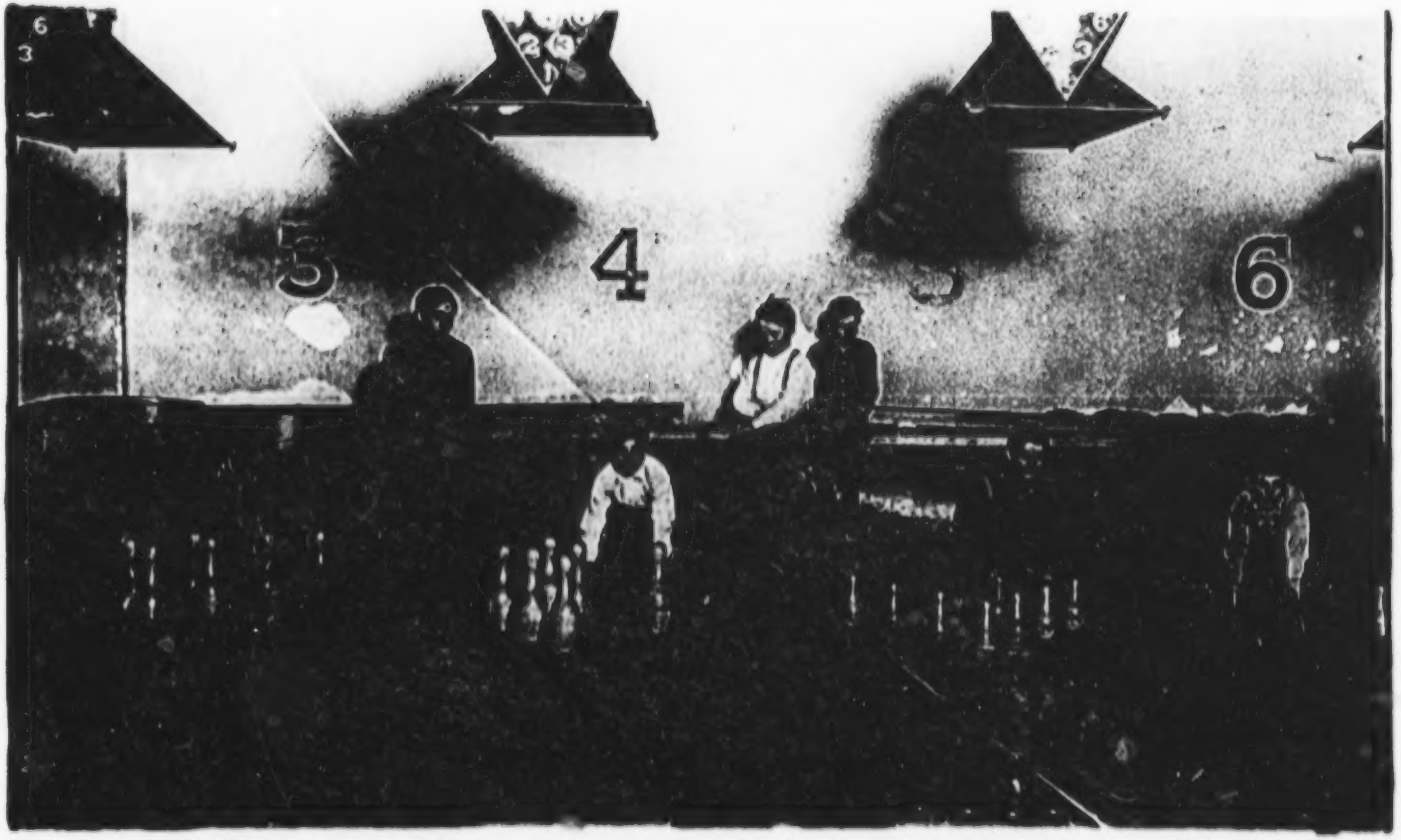

Document 16: Photograph of boys working in an arcade bowling alley, Trenton, NJ, December 20, 1909.

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